

JOHN MAIR'S HISTORIOGRAPHICAL HUMANISM:
PORTRAITS OF OUTLAWS, ROBBERS, AND REBELS IN HIS
HISTORIA MAIORIS BRITANNIAE TAM ANGLIAE QUAM SCOTIAE
(*HISTORY OF GREATER BRITAIN*)

Alexander L. Kaufman

The medieval British chronicle tradition remains a corpus of writing that offers points of view on issues of history and culture ranging from those that represent common understandings of events to those that are decidedly subjective. Some texts within the realm of historical literature offer up a limited sense of historical introspection and commentary. For example, most annals and even some chronicles provide only the barest and briefest amount of information: the year, who was the reigning monarch, and a sentence (or even a sentence fragment) that describes in the most factual terms what occurred in that year. Other forms of historical writing describe historical moments with a greater amount of elaboration, subjectivity, introspection, and sometimes bias; here, some texts that readily come to mind include Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the Middle English prose *Brut* tradition, the *Polychronicon* tradition, Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*, and Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Add to this list the various pro-Yorkist and pro-Lancastrian narratives from the fifteenth century as well as the chronicles of London, and we begin to see the variety of historical literature from the medieval period that was produced in Britain.

It was within the second set of traditions, with its more nuanced elaboration, that John Mair's (or Major's) *Historia Maioris Britanniae* was written towards the tail-end of the Middle Ages and published in 1521, most likely in Paris, by Jodocus Badius Ascensius.¹ In his chronicle, Mair presents a brief but rather intriguing portrait of the famous outlaw Robin Hood and his lieutenant, Little John. However, when we examine other robbers and rebels within the chronicle, it becomes clear that Robin, who is a creature of myth and legend, is given a decidedly rosier representation than other real-life criminals. In this essay, I wish to examine Mair's other depictions of outlaws, robbers, and rebels. Specifically, I will look at Mair's representation of three

outsiders: Robin Hood, William Wallace, and Jack Cade, the leader of a popular revolt against Henry VI in 1450. Mair's representations of outlaws, robbers, and rebels are deeply influenced by the author's nationalistic leanings and his own notions of humanism. As such, Mair's depiction of Robin Hood (while unique) is one that needs to be contextualized within the chronicler's various depictions of similar transgressive figures.

Mair was born in 1467 near Haddington, which is located in the Scottish Lowlands, around twenty miles east of Edinburgh. It was here that he attended grammar school before moving on to university. While some believe that he first attended St. Andrews University, the first record of Mair's university career points to his one year (1491-92) at God's House, which from 1505 onward is called Christ's College, at Cambridge.² By 1493 he moved to Paris, where at the Collège de Sainte-Barbe he received his master's degree in 1494. The next year he took up the position of regent in arts and, under the direction of Jan Standonk, began his theology studies at the Collège de Montaigu, where he rubbed elbows with Erasmus, a fellow student. In 1499, Mair and his colleague Noel Beda assumed responsibility for the college as co-principals after Standonk was banished from Paris. In 1501 Mair earned his bachelor's in theology, and in 1506 while at the College of Navarre, where he had been associated since around 1499, he was awarded his doctorate in theology. Immediately, Mair landed a teaching appointment at the leading college for theology in Paris, an institution that is indeed still one of the greatest colleges today associated with the study of theology: the college of Robert de Sorbon (later named the "collège de Sorbonne," and finally "la Sorbonne"). The nearly twenty-five years that Mair spent in Paris were extremely productive, for he completed at least forty-six books, many of which were issued in multiple editions and served as textbooks in leading theological programs. Moreover, Mair was at the center of a theological and philosophical movement of humanist thinkers at the University of Paris, and among them were a number of Scots: George Lokert, Robert Galbraith, William Manderson, David Cranston, Gilbert Crab, and William Cranston.³ In 1518 Mair left Paris and returned to Scotland, where he became principal of the University of Glasgow. He soon left for the University of St. Andrews in 1523. Only three years later, he returned to Paris to teach and to write; his final book, a commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, was published in 1530 and is a text that I shall return to later in this essay. Mair returned to Scotland (and to St. Andrews) for good in 1531.

Mair's *History of Greater Britain* and his contributions to historical literature have not received extensive scholarly analysis, though a number of essays do take a critical look at the impact of the author's work. Roger A. Mason provides an astute close reading of a number of passages in Mair's *History* and places them within the context of the humanist's then radical promotion of an Anglo-Scottish union (*Kingship* 36-77). He also provides an analysis of the stylistic and rhetorical differences between Mair's historiography and that of his contemporary, Hector Boece, whose *Scotorum Historia* was also published in Paris in 1527 ("From Chronicle to History" 53-66).⁴ Indeed, Boece's work may in fact have been written as a response to Mair's text and even intended as a criticism of it (Burnes 77). A returning motif in Mair's *History* is a desire for balance, especially in political thought and action. The dedicatory note is itself representative of Mair's desire for an Anglo-Scots union: "Fifth James, King of Scots, of happiest birth" (cxxxii). James V was in many ways symbolic of the possibilities of such a union, being the son of a Scottish king, James IV, and the grandson of an English one, Henry VII. Mair's sense of how political and social events are connected to the humanistic values he had come to appreciate in his wide education helps to explain the differences in the ways he treats the three outsiders discussed in this study.

ROBIN HOOD

The medieval chronicle tradition presents a number of different representations of Robin Hood and his band. The first such record of Robin Hood and Little John in a chronicle is in Andrew of Wyntoun's *Orygynale Chronicle* (ca. 1420):

Litol Iohun and Robert Hude
Waythmen war commendit gud;
In Ingilwode and Bernnysdaile
Thai oyssit al this tyme thar trawale. (Knight and Ohlgren 24)

The *oyssit* that the two men performed (that is, the "labor" or "work"), was of value to some people, we presume the commoners. Wyntoun's portrait, which places the outlaws in the year 1283, during the Scottish wars of Edward I, is that of two benevolent forest outlaws, who were respected and loved—a description that is at odds with Walter Bower's summation of the two outlaws. In his *Continuation* of John of Fordun's

Scotichronicon (ca. 1440), Bower called Robin a “famous murderer,” and lamented that, along with Little John and other accomplices, he arose from “among the disinherited, whom the foolish populace are so inordinately fond of celebrating both in tragedies and comedies, and about whom are delighted to hear the jesters and minstrels sing above all other ballads” (Knight and Ohlgren 26). Bower also chose to move the time of Robin and Little John’s activities backward and slightly more distant in the past than Wyntoun’s. Now, according to Bower, Robin Hood and Little John’s outlawry takes place during the reign of Henry III, specifically 1266, during Simon de Montfort’s rebellion.

Significantly, John Mair places Robin Hood within the late twelfth century, during a time of notable bad kingship in the reign of King John (r. 1199-1216), and while the late-medieval poems and plays of Robin Hood do not take place during this time, almost all modern iterations of the Robin Hood legend in print and on film place the action of the outlaw between the regencies of Richard I and John I, when Richard is on crusade and his brother is left in charge of his kingdom, or when Richard dies and John ascends to the throne. Mair’s version of the Robin Hood outlaw is similar to these modern versions: he is a quasi-gentrified individual who has a clear code of conduct. Robin and Little John “lay in wait in the woods, but spoiled of their goods those only that were wealthy. They took the life of no man, unless he either attacked them or offered resistance in defence of his property”; moreover, he has some one hundred men ready to fight (and fight well) on his behalf. Mair’s summation of the outlaw is this: “The robberies of this man I condemn, but of all robbers he was the humanest and the chief” (156-57). Here, Mair uses the noble moniker “dux” to denote Robin Hood, and so there is a sense of elevation and civility associated with Mair’s Robin. However, Mair’s outlaw does kill, and it is assumed that he has killed individuals, perhaps many, as is noted in the above quotation. Mair’s history of Robin Hood is a history of legend, and perhaps that is why the chronicler is able to rationalize Robin’s ways. After all, a person who steals only from the wealthy and kills only those who attempted to do harm to a person’s property is less likely to be categorized as a murderer. And as others have noted, Mair’s characterization of Robin may be a reference to the outlaw Fouke fitz Waryn, whose period of outlawry also occurred during the tumultuous and disastrous reign of King John (Knight and Ohlgren 27). The Scottish chronicler truly offers no criticism of the outlaw. Indeed, Robin, much like Mair’s William Wallace, is a figure who triumphs (or

attempts to triumph) over a corrupt government. However, as we will see, Mair is not universal in claiming that all rebels are humane.

In his preface to his English translation of Mair's Latin chronicle, Archibald Constable states that he would like to "say something about the singular fairness, the anxious impartiality, of Mair's judgment of the English nation, the cordiality of his appreciation of English customs" (Mair xxi). Summarizing Mair's contribution as a humanist writer, Constable remarks that the chronicler "showed the insight of a philosophic statesman," which makes him "unique among Scottish writers" (Mair xxii). But as with most medieval writers of historiography, Mair was not subtle when it came to identifying those whom he disliked. William Caxton was perhaps his most notable target, for the Scottish chronicler, in Constable's words, "heartily abhorred" the famous editor and translator for his inability to foster a sense of "national amity" within his chronicles (Mair xxiv). Mair, it can be said, sought to unify the English and Scottish people under their shared sense of religion and humanity. However, this unification of peoples meant that certain histories needed to be reinterpreted and refashioned. I will return to Robin Hood a bit later in this essay, but first, for a point of comparison, I would like to examine Mair's representation of that decidedly Scottish outlaw, William Wallace. As a humanist historian of the later Middle Ages, Mair does something that is rather intriguing and a bit revolutionary.

WILLIAM WALLACE

The outlaw and Scottish patriot William Wallace (ca. 1272-1305) is a well known figure and medieval icon, but his origins are almost completely uncertain, including when he was outlawed. Blind Hary, in his *Hary's Wallace*, describes him as being eighteen when outlawed, so the date would be either 1291 or 1292 (McDiarmid 1:1-16). The parliament at Saint Andrews officially declares Wallace an outlaw in March 1304 (Fisher 220). John Mair first presents Caxton's version of Wallace's outlawry, his activities, and finally his torture and death. Then, as if to present a more accurate and perhaps objective version of Wallace's history, Mair writes his own account of Wallace's life. Even in his presentation of Caxton's account, however, Mair does not provide his readers with a verbatim narrative. Instead, Mair translates, summarizes, paraphrases, and interprets Caxton's text for us. First, Mair describes how "the Scots chose for their king a certain William Wallace, up to this

point a man with nothing illustrious in his origin" (193). In an interesting move, Mair decidedly revises Caxton's original text; the original reads as follows:

Wherfore y^e Scottes chose vnto theyr kyng Willyam Waleys a rybaud and an harlot, comen vp nought, and to englysshmen did moche harme. (Mair 193, n.1)

Mair's summation of Caxton's version of Wallace's death is replete with pointed political language, calling the outlaw a "perfidious traitor" (193). In a transition paragraph that is a remarkable example of the power of rhetoric, Mair rebukes Caxton, not so much for his unfavorable portrait of the Scottish outlaw but really for his inability to craft a more accurate and objective version. For Mair, Caxton's narrative contains a "mass of incoherencies" and "silly fabrications"; Mair then quickly proceeds to "place the history of the Scots in its true light" (194).

Mair's version of Wallace's birth, breeding, and valor is somewhat awe-inspiring, for it is full of vivid details of Wallace's upbringing, his physical and social characteristics, his martial abilities, and how he was "hailed as regent by most of the Scots, with the universal acclamation of the common people" (196). This last notion is inherently significant. In one sentence, Mair compares Wallace's ability to draw up an army and lead it successfully on the field of battle to some of the heroes of classical antiquity: Hannibal, Ulysses, and Telamonian Ajax (196). In another work of Mair's, his *In Quartum Sententiarum*, the chronicler compares Achilles' penchant for eating the muscles from oxen and not fowl with Wallace's similar dietary predilections (195, n. 1). Much has been made of the relationship between Wallace and Robert the Bruce (1274-1329). Both had success and failure on the field of battle. Wallace defeated the English at the Battle of Stirling Bridge (1297) and soon after seized Berwick and Edinburgh; the Battle of Falkirk (1298) was a significant Scottish loss, which saw Wallace relinquish his title of Guardian of Scotland and flee to France. Mair acquiesces that Robert Bruce flourished at a later date and defeated the English and King Edward II at Bannockburn in 1314, but, nonetheless, he argues that Wallace "had no other instructions in warfare than experience and his own genius" (195).

Mair does not dwell upon the various English atrocities that were carried out during Wallace's tenure as rebel leader. Instead of underscoring the hatred that so many Scots felt towards Edward I (as well as many of the Scottish nobility who surrendered to Edward, such as

John Balliol), Mair dispenses with this over-heated political rhetoric and chooses instead to elevate Wallace to near-mythical status. The English are not represented as blood-thirsty animals; instead, they are weak, clueless, and confused, simply unable to match Wallace's abilities:

[T]wo or even three Englishmen were scarce able to make stand against him,—such was his bodily strength, such also the quickness of his understanding, and his indomitable courage. (196)

In Mair's re-appraisal and re-fashioning of Caxton's narrative, readers are privy to a more rounded character. Wallace is not the one-dimensional figure of Caxton's history, a man who is less of a human and more of a monster. Mair humanizes Wallace, and in doing so he also makes him into a larger-than-life hero, a person who resembles the Wallace of literature. Perhaps Mair was influenced by Blind Henry's (or Hary's) narrative, the *Wallace*, which dates to 1476-78, for Mair is the one who first mentioned the supposed author of the Middle Scots outlaw narrative.⁵ However, the influence is more in tone than in content. Near the end of Mair's own history of Wallace, he mentions how, "in the time of [his] childhood," the blind author "fabricated a whole book about William Wallace. . . . I however can give but a partial credence to such writings as these" (205). While Harry the Minstrel's long verse narrative does include a sizable number of literary embellishments (moments of fantasy, comedic interplay, elements of romance), his overall portrait of Wallace is that of a fierce leader who commands respect, which is very similar to Mair's outline of the hero.⁶

The literary modes that are present in Mair's Wallace section do present some issues concerning the representation of the past. Specifically, Wallace is more a character than a being; indeed, the chronicler's description of him, and the parallels that he explicitly draws between other real and mythical figures, may push the reading of Wallace from the factual world of reality to the figurative world of literature. If this is carried out to the furthest extreme, then the real Wallace may be read as a literary creation, borne out of the world of legend. When we place Mair's Wallace alongside his brief description of Robin Hood, the Scots historian does indeed create a dominant image of two leaders who were crafty military men and who were against the monarchy. As Stephen Knight has noted, Mair's Robin Hood is "closer to the Scots anti-royal war-leader model than the popular English hero"

(107). And while several Robin Hood poems share a number of comparable scenes, such as the notable potter disguise in *Robin Hood and the Potter* (Knight and Ohlgren 66-67), the similarities in character that exist in Mair's Robin Hood and his Wallace are notable. If we turn now to a rebellious event that exists in a more pressing and immediate space of temporality for Mair, we can perhaps see how the chronicler's presentation, far from offering the tribute to leadership deserving of respect that we have just seen in his depictions of Robin Hood and William Wallace, instead provides an account that more nearly resembles contemporaneous reports.

JACK CADE AND HIS REBELLION

The Jack Cade Rebellion of 1450 took place over the summer months of May, June, and July. With its origins in Kent, the large rebel army of men and women, who were mostly artisans, yeomen, laborers, and farmers, but also included a few members of the second estate, were wholly dissatisfied with Henry VI's policies, actions, and inactions. The rebellion was similar in many respects to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 in that both groups of rebels voiced concern over unfair wages and taxes. Compared to the rebels of 1381, however, the complaints of Cade's appeared to be far more personal and specific. The Bills of Complaint that the rebels drew up attacked the various levels of cronyism in the government, vented their displeasure at the loss of Normandy, and accused the local sheriffs and church officials of corruption.⁷ The rebel leader, Jack Cade, remains a shadowy figure of uncertain origins. With his charisma and military skill, he brought London to a standstill and caused Henry VI to abandon his capital for the safe confines of Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire, roughly one-hundred miles from the city. Cade, much like Robin Hood and his band, vows not to rob and steal from those in London who are honorable citizens. However, Cade's (and his rebels') downfall appears to be the result of an excessive consumption of alcohol. Once the rebels are drunk, the pillaging and executions grow out of control.⁸

The fifteenth-century chronicles of London remain the corpus of historical literature that best records the multiplicity of representations of the Cade Rebellion. Sometimes, the chroniclers are sympathetic towards the ideals and aims of the rebels. Other times, however, the chroniclers' remarks are downright mean and nasty. The *Chronicle of William Gregory*, Skinner is one of the more expressive examples of English

historical writing in the fifteenth-century chronicle tradition where humor, satire, and a rich tapestry of expressive prose is used to describe, among other things, the rebels of 1450. The chronicler is certainly adept at capturing the feel of the moment and is not afraid to add his own barbed opinion of Cade and the rebels. *Gregory's* chronicler can be said to employ such political propagandistic devices as *name-calling*: the rebels are “hyghe as pygysfete,” “ryffe raffe,” “halfe be-syde hyr wytte,” and Cade is called “symplle” on more than one occasion as well as a “fals traytoure” (Gairdner 190, 191, 192, 194). One manuscript of the Middle English prose *Brut*, British Library MS Add. 10099, contains this impressive rubric for the year 1450:

How this yere was thensurrexion in Kent of þe communes, of
whome Iake Cade, On Irishman, was Capitayne. (Brie 516.23-24)

The prose *Brut's* lengthy section on the Cade Revolt begins with this line:

Dis yeere was A gret Assemblée & gadering togedre of þe comons
of Kent in gret nombre, & made an Insurrexion, & rebelled
Ageynst þe Kyng & his lawes, & ordeynd þame A capitayn called
Iohn Cayd. (Brie 517.4-7)

That Cade is “associated” with Ireland, and therefore also the Duke of York, who was in effect removed from London and sent to Ireland at the time, is something of interest. From the beginning of Henry VI's reign there was a definite Irish “problem”: could English rule be established outside of Dublin (Griffiths 163)? The Irish, much like the Kentish, were viewed as rebellious people who posed a serious threat to the stability of the crown. Moreover, there exists a high degree of “otherness” in the Irish as seen by English writers of the time: wild men and women who were not too far removed from their pagan, pre-Christian selves. This chronicle is just one of many late-medieval pieces of historical writing in which racial and ethnic othering is used to advance ideological viewpoints.⁹

Mair's late-medieval examination of the Cade Rebellion is one in which he is aligned with most of the London chroniclers. While Mair's admonition against Cade's behavior and that of his rebels is not unique among the chroniclers of the rebellion, his repetition of Cade's “Irishness” is something that is distinct. One of Cade's aliases was “John

Mortimer,” and some have suggested that this was a familial connection to Richard Duke of York, who, as mentioned above, was in Ireland in exile at the time of the rebellion, and who led an unsuccessful minor revolt against the Duke of Somerset in 1452, a rebellion in which versions of Cade’s Bills of Complaint were circulated. The repetition of Cade’s supposed Irish ancestry is a significant inclusion in the description of the rebellion. In no other chronicle record of the rebellion do we see such a high frequency of Irish signifiers: the “mob” and the “rabble” are under the command of an “Irish leader,” and Cade’s Irishness is mentioned six times in roughly two short pages. Mair’s most striking remark comes late in the Cade narrative when a bounty is offered for Cade:

Proclamation was made a short while afterward that whoever should take that captain, John Cade the Irishman, living or dead, should be rewarded with one thousand pounds of royal money. (375)

Note how Cade’s nomenclature is explicitly connected with his believed nationality. But Mair’s remarks do not end there.

Mair is quick to condemn this rebellion, and he argues that “there is nothing more unprofitable than a rebellion of the common people.” He calls such rebels “brute beasts,” and aligns himself, rhetorically, with the royals:

There is nothing for it but the sword when the common people rise in wanton insolence against the state; otherwise they will confound in one common ruin themselves and all else. For which reason Henry the Sixth went into Kent, and at Canterbury did justice upon this pestiferous people. After that he went into Sussex, and executed like judgment there. I have nothing but approval for the zeal for justice of this king, as he showed the same in curbing this unruly rabble and severely punishing them for their evil deeds, to the end that there should be less likelihood in time to come of such frivolous insurrections; for facile pardon gives not seldom the occasion to offend. (376-77)

While Mair celebrates and perhaps romanticizes the exploits of Robin Hood and William Wallace, the activities of Cade’s rebels and the leader’s character are singularly rebuked. William Wallace and especially

Robin Hood were for Mair part of a glorified, legendary past, yet both men were more balanced, and so were their exploits. And while Mair tries to remain a neutral and objective historian, he is unable to hide his own sense of affinity toward Wallace and to some degree Robin Hood. For Mair, it is clear that not all outlaws and rebels are the same. As Roger Mason demonstrates, a key phrase in Mair's political thought in his *History* is *totus populus*, the "whole people" (*Kingship* 68-72). While at first glance the phrase suggests an "uncompromising and astonishingly radical populism" by which the will of the people dictates political sovereignty, upon closer analysis of a number of popular rebellions and conflicts—the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, Cade's Rebellion, and the dispute between John Baliol and Robert Bruce—it is clear that only prominent members of the community who act on the crown's behalf truly exercise "sovereignty in actions against the crown" (Mason, *Kingship* 69, 70). If we turn to the passage in the *History* that examines the Bruce-Baliol dispute, we begin to see how Mair's notion of political resistance is tied to a stratified political landscape and has similarities to the estates system:

Whose it is to appoint a king, his it likewise is to decide any incident of a doubtful character that may arise concerning that king; but it is from the people, and most of all from the chief men and the nobility who act for the common people, that kings have their institution; it belongs therefore to princes, prelates, and nobles to decide as to any ambiguity that may emerge in regard to a king; and their decision shall remain inviolable. But just thus was it with Robert Bruce, and then most of all when he had driven from the kingdom those who had been active disturbers of the kingdom's peace. (215)

The Bruce was himself a prince, prelate, and noble all in one; Wallace was a person whose abilities were recognized by the majority of the ruling class. In contrast, Cade was a shadowy figure, and his political acumen was radical, contradictory, and ultimately dangerous—to the crown but also to the group he was supposedly helping, the commons. The aggressive and nasty moments of Cade's Rebellion demonstrated that the leaders of the revolt had very little desire for compromise; after all, they issued a series of demands to the crown, and when those complaints were not met, the scene became ugly: impromptu trials and executions, looting, arson, and general mayhem. Cade's Rebellion lacked

the involvement of a sizable collection of nobles; perhaps this is one of many reasons why it so soundly failed and why Mair's attitude toward the revolt was so negative.

In contrast, it is clear that both Wallace and Bruce had a degree of sovereignty that Cade did not. But what of Robin Hood? Mair's Robin Hood is a more harmonious figure than Cade, and perhaps this is what the historian was driving at. Mair, as we recall, was an astute philosopher, and his last published work was a commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, a text that contains the Greek philosopher's concept of the Golden Mean, where happiness is a balance between two extremes: excess and deficiency. A number of scholars, poets, and philosophers of the English Renaissance and Enlightenment were quite fond of the political implications of Aristotle's concept; Shakespeare's history plays, in particular *Henry IV, Part 1*, ruminate on the dangers of disharmony—political, spatial, cosmic—and call for a more balanced approach to governance. Mair's Robin Hood is a balanced person. Biologically, he is “an Englishman,” yet geographically he is popular “all over Britain.” As Stephen Knight has noted, Robin Hood is given noble descriptors and is on his way toward becoming a fully gentrified character: “he was the humanest and the chief” (108). Like Robert Bruce, this Robin Hood appears to have a necessary ingredient for political sovereignty: a touch of noble blood (or at the very least noble aspirations of both body and mind).

The aim of this essay was to look at a number of different transgressive figures in John Mair's *History of Greater Britain* and to examine the historian's representation of them in light of his thoughts on popular rebellions. For Mair, the greater balance one rebel has—and the greater association he has with the nobility—the more comprehensive his sovereignty will be. Mair does not use Robin Hood as a voice for an Anglo-Scots union; Robin Hood is, after all, a legendary and mythical figure, and one wonders if Mair understood that two opposing political and cultural forces would require a real person to unite the split parties. Nevertheless, his outlaw is one of a number of like figures who successfully negotiate the somewhat pliable notions of Renaissance humanism and political sovereignty.

Auburn University at Montgomery

Notes

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Seventh Biennial Conference of the International Association for Robin Hood Studies, University of Rochester, October 2009. I would like to thank the two anonymous readers from *Enarratio* for their helpful comments on this essay.

¹ The only other Latin edition of the chronicle was published in 1740 in Edinburgh, and there is no extant manuscript.

² For biographical information on Mair, I consulted the following sources: Broadie, *A History of Scottish Philosophy* 47-61, and “John Mair” 36: 182-84; Kennedy 2: 1060; Mason, *Kingship and Commonweal* 36-37.

³ While this essay examines Mair’s chronicle and his historical writing, his other avenues of critical thought—in the fields of theology, ethics, logic, metaphysics, and biblical commentary—are in many ways just as impressive and perhaps more significant. For the standard source on Mair’s contribution to logic, see Broadie, *The Circle of John Mair*.

⁴ For other studies on Mair’s *History*, see Williamson 97-102 and Cant 21-31.

⁵ The poem survives in a single manuscript, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 19.2.22, which also contains a version of John Barbour’s *Bruce*.

⁶ Regarding Mair’s assessment of Blind Hary’s literary skills, Edward J. Cowan writes thus: “John Mair was a great admirer [of William Wallace] but because of his innate Latinate superiority and snobbery he was less enthusiastic about Henry the (blind) minstrel who, he claimed, ‘used to recite his tales in the households of nobles, and thereby got the food and clothing he deserved’” (12-13).

⁷ For a theoretical and persuasive reading of these Bills of Complaint, see Grummitt 107-22.

⁸ For studies of the Cade Rebellion, see Harvey, Griffiths 610-65, Bohna, and Kaufman.

⁹ In many ways, this stereotyping of the Irish as wildmen persists. For a summary of history between the English and Irish focusing on these stereotypes see Dolan 208-28, esp. 208-09.

Works Cited

- Bohna, Montgomery. "Armed Force and Civic Legitimacy in Jack Cade's Revolt, 1450." *English Historical Review* 118 (2003): 563-82.
- Brie, Friedrich W. D., ed. *The Brut or The Chronicles of England*. Early English Text Society, OS 131 and 136. London: Kegan Paul and Oxford UP, 1906, 1908; rpt., Woodbridge and Rochester: Boydell and Brewer, 2000.
- Broadie, Alexander. *The Circle of John Mair: Logic and Logicians in Pre-Reformation Scotland*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985.
- . *A History of Scottish Philosophy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009.
- . "John Mair." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 61 vols. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2009. 36: 182-84.
- Burnes, J. H. *The True Law of Kingship: Concepts of Monarchy in Early-Modern Scotland*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
- Cant, R. G. "John Major." *Veterum Laudes, Being a Tribute to the Achievements of the Members of St. Salvator's College during Five Hundred Years*. Ed. J. B. Salmond. Edinburgh: Published for the University Court of the University of St. Andrews by Oliver and Boyd, 1950. 21-31.
- Cowan, Edward J. "William Wallace: 'The Choice of the Estates.'" *The Wallace Book*. Ed. Edward J. Cowan. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007. 9-25.
- Dolan, Terence. "Writing in Ireland." *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*. Ed. David Wallace. 1999. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005. 208-28.
- Fisher, Andrew. *William Wallace*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007.
- Gairdner, James, ed. *Chronicle of William Gregory, Skinner. Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century*. Camden Society, NS 17. Westminster: Nichols and Sons, 1876. 55-239.
- Griffiths, R. A. *The Reign of Henry VI*. London: Benn, 1981; rpt. Phoenix Mill: Sutton, 1998.

- Grummitt, David. "Deconstructing Cade's Rebellion: Discourse and Politics in the Mid Fifteenth Century." *The Fifteenth Century VI: Identity and Insurgency in the Late Middle Ages*. Ed. Linda Clark. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006. 107-22.
- Harvey, I. M. W. *Jack Cade's Rebellion of 1450*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991.
- Kaufman, Alexander L. *The Historical Literature of the Jack Cade Rebellion*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.
- Kennedy, Edward Donald. "John Mair." *The Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*. 2 vols. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010. 2: 1060.
- Knight, Stephen. "Rabbie Hood: The Development of the English Outlaw Myth in Scotland." *Bandit Territories: British Outlaws and Their Traditions*. Ed. Helen Phillips. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 2008. 99-118.
- , and Thomas Ohlgren, eds. *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*. TEAMS Middle English Texts. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.
- Mair, John. *A History of Greater Britain As Well England As Scotland*. Trans. and ed. Archibald Constable. Scottish History Society 10. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1892.
- Mason, Roger A. "From Chronicle to History: Recovering the Past in Renaissance Scotland." *Building the Past/Konstruktion der eigenen Vergangenheit*. Ed. Rudolf Suntrup and Jan R Veenstra. Medieval to Early Modern Culture / Kultureller Wandel vom Mittelalter zur Frühen Neuzeit 7. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006. 53-66.
- . *Kingship and the Commonweal: Political Thought in Renaissance and Reformation Scotland*. East Lothian: Tuckwell, 1998.
- McDiarmid, Matthew P., ed. *Hary's Wallace (Vita Nobilissimi Defensoris Scotie Wilelmi Wallace Militis)*. 2 vols. Scottish Text Society, Fourth Series, 4, 5. Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1968-69.
- Williamson, Arthur H. *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI: The Apocalypse, the Union and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture*. Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979.